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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6789
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0610

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STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/FO:ATACHCO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2016

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SUBJECT: LEBANON: HANIYYEH DECLINES TO VISIT STRIFE-RIDDEN
LEBANON

REF: STATE 195195

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason: 1.4 (d)

¶1. Polchief checked with the Foreign Ministry on the proposed visit of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyyeh to Lebanon. We were informed that due to Lebanon's political crisis Haniyyeh had dropped Beirut from his regional visit itinerary. A rumor had it that Prime Minister Siniora turned off the visit, citing security concerns due to the Hizballah-led opposition's near-siege of his Grand Serail complex. However, our Ministry source indicated that the decision to forgo a visit to Beirut came from the Palestinian side. Our ministry source shared our sense of irony that the Hamas leader would steer clear of Lebanon because of political strife.

¶2. We nevertheless delivered reftel points regarding Haniyyeh's unconstructive role in the Palestinian Authority. Our interlocutor took the points on board and promised to relay them to senior levels, but cautioned that the Ministry's political leadership and policy-making apparatus are in turmoil following the late-November resignation of Shiite Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh.
FELTMAN